

Maurice Hinchey NEWS

26TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT, NEW YORK

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HINCHEY FIGHTS FOR MORE FEDERAL ASSISTANCE FOR LOCAL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

BINGHAMTON - U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey (NY-26) today vowed to push for more federal funds for local emergency preparedness efforts and for the expansion of a successful police officer hiring program. Through the federal appropriations process and through legislation he has introduced, Hinchey hopes to provide greater federal assistance to community emergency services and law enforcement agencies.

A member of the House Appropriations Committee, Hinchey said he would seek to provide increased funding for local emergency preparedness in federal spending bills. Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, he has held meetings with numerous representatives of emergency response agencies and municipalities throughout New York's 26th congressional district. Through these meetings and a survey he circulated, it became clear that most municipalities have comprehensive plans to deal with emergencies, but lack the resources to fully implement their plans. Hinchey supports a program of federal grants made directly to local entities.

"There are new demands being placed on first responders and these demands must be matched with a commitment of resources from the federal government," Hinchey added. "Everyone has spoken about the critical importance of firefighters, police officers and health professionals in a September 11th-type scenario. It's time to back up the rhetoric with some cold, hard cash."

In addition to his efforts in the appropriations process, Hinchey has also written and introduced a bill to provide a \$1,000 federal income tax credit to volunteer firefighters and emergency medical responders. The bill is intended to help alleviate the problem agencies experience in recruiting and retaining volunteers.

Hinchey also criticized a Bush Administration plan to eliminate the hiring component of the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program. The COPS program was created by the 1994 Crime Bill, which Hinchey supported. It encompasses several grant initiatives and is primarily geared toward putting more police officers into the community. Hinchey has cosponsored legislation to expand the program, which has provided 26th Congressional District communities in the Southern Tier with \$2.4 million and 57 new officers.

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"The COPS program has been tremendously successful across the nation and in our region," said Hinchey. "With law enforcement agencies regularly being placed on terror alerts, now is the worst possible time to put an end to this initiative. Once again, the Bush Administration is going after an effective program in an effort to compensate for the president's faulty fiscal policy."

Southern Tier communities represented by Hinchey have received COPS awards as follows:

City of Binghamton	\$150,000
Broome County Consortium	\$464,686*
Broome County Sheriff's Department	\$919,883*
Village of Candor	\$30,386
Deposit	\$62,262
Johnson City	\$75,000
Village of Owego	\$268,094
Village of Port Dickinson	\$127,469
SUNY Research Foundation for Binghamton University	\$225,000
Village of Waverly	\$109,911
Total	\$2,432,691

*Portions lie in other congressional districts.